

SAINT ANDREW'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER

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Does God still speak? Have you ever wondered that? Does God, THE God, the almighty creator of heaven and earth still communicate with God's people?

Or is it just something of the past? Some weird stories in the Bible that no one can verify? Does God talk?

I guess it is all a matter of faith, isn't it? After my many years of studies and my journey of faith and relationship with God, I have concluded that God does still speak. Even more so, God speaks to me, and to you in a unique way. That's right! You can also hear God!

What I am about to reveal may surprise you, but I don't get a phone call or an email each day from God telling me what to do...actually God's "voice" was rarely heard in the scripture, it was through other methods that God communicated with His people. Those still are available to us today.

God speaks through Scripture. Isaiah 55:11 states, "so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it." Every time we seek to "hear" God in scripture, we learn. Sometimes we get direct instructions, sometimes it's all about what not to do. Even the most mindboggling passages can become a message through the Holy Spirit. So, if you want to hear God's voice...read scripture!

God also speaks through our circumstances. This does not mean God brings bad things to us so that we learn. God works through every circumstance, so even if we are dealing with the consequences of our own actions or other's actions, God can use that to speak to us. It's in challenging times and also in joyful times that if we seek with all our heart, we find God (Jeremiah 29:13). We do need to make sure that we are actually listening to God instead of our own desires. One rule that helps me is that God does not contradict God's self and usually uses other people to help us discern. Yes, sometimes God speaks through our brothers and sisters too!

I also find God speaks in prayer...when I listen. If I set aside my God's to do list and take time to quiet my soul, I can hear God's whispering in my heart.

Elijah, one of God's great prophets was tired and disappointed. He had tried without much success to warn the Israelites that their ways were not God's way.

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He had fought against Idolatry and many false prophets, and in despair, scriptures tell us he went to the mountain: "He said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.' Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; 12 and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. 13 When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'" 1 Kings 19: 11-13

It was in the silence that Elijah found God and that gave him the strength to continue his journey.

It is a new year, full of new blessings ahead of us and new challenges. My prayer is that in all we do, we seek God's voice and direction. We recommit ourselves to our discipleship journey, and we help one another to "hear" correctly. God is already in our future, and we can rest in peace knowing that whatever 2018 brings, God can use it for the transformation of the Kingdom.

For we know God keeps God's promises. Jesus said he will be with us always to the end of time, and we can count on that!

Many blessings for you this new year and always.

Ximena



Dates to Remember:



Clean-Up Day every First Saturday of the month

Thrft Shop every First Saturday of the month, 9 AM to 12 PM

Bishop's Clergy Convocation: January 9th to 11th the pastor will be away

Human Relations Day: January 14, 2018, Special Sunday UMC

Souper Bowl of Caring: February 4 2018

Administrative Church Council: February 6, 2018, 7:00 PM at the parsonage

Connecticut District Resource Days

Saturday, February 3, 2018 - 9:00 am –noon

Sunday, February 11, 2018 - 2:00 – 5:00 pm

Please plan to join us for a time of information, inspiration, and opportunities to connect with United Methodists from around our district. More details will be coming soon

A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition (Contemporary Version)

I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will, place me with whom you will.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you,
Praised for you or criticized for you.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service.
And now, O wonderful and holy God,
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,
you are mine, and I am yours.
So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
Let it also be made in heaven. Amen.



Many thanks to everyone who purchased poinsettias for the Christmas Eve altar. The display of beautiful plants brought joy to the service. Thanks also to Ralph and Carolyn Pickup for ordering and picking up the plants, and to Morris Penington for helping set up the display. Their help is greatly appreciated.

Carol Tripp



The mission of The United Methodist Church is to "Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" (Matthew 28: 18-20; Matthew 22: 36-40). This mission is achieved through vital congregations that equip and empower people to be disciples of Jesus Christ in their homes and communities around the world.

Our Vitalsigns:

The Vitalsigns Dashboard is a tool developed by Brick River through GCFA. This tool allows you to track your weekly worship attendance, professions of faith, small group participation, missional participation and financial giving for your congregation. It is a tool designed to help congregations follow their progress on the goals that they set for each year, based upon the goal-setting challenge initiated by the Vital Congregations work. It is a response to the Call to Action to focus on fostering and sustaining an increase in the number of vital congregations effective in the mission of The United Methodist Church.

Date	Worship Attendance	Small Groups Attendance (week)	Pledges & Offerings	Charitable Giving	New Members
12/17/17	67	17	\$960	\$0	2
12/10/17	38	7	\$907	\$20	0
12/3/17	31	7	\$803	\$130	0
11/26/17	41	7	\$881	\$10	0
11/19/17	42	8	\$770	\$52	0
11/12/17	44	11	\$868	\$0	0
11/5/17	43	0	\$951	\$102	0
10/29/17	36	0	\$922	\$56	0
10/22/17	50	8	\$696	\$266	0



Charlton Tobias **1/2**
Lynn Stowe **1/15**
Jim Copeland **1/18**
Briannah Morales **1/19**
Angelique Smith **1/26**
Brenda Herrmann **1/29**

Ralph Pickup **2/9**
Carmen Tobias **2/9**
Lucille Clancy **2/10**
Rose Bellagamba **2/11**
John M. Quimby **2/14**
Brenda Burgos **2/23**
Irene Diaz **2/25**

Missions



We serve God by serving others. Here is what you can do:



Connectional Giving: all of us giving together allows United Methodists to do together what we cannot do alone.

We join in with United Methodists around the world in 6 special collections through the year. The money collected goes 100% to a specific mission designated by the general church. For more information, go to UMGIVING.com. Next Special Collection is Human Relations Day, January 14, 2018. Every first Sunday you can donate to the **Pastor's Discretionary Fund** — this money is used by the pastor to help with immediate needs in the community.



Food Pantry Collection: non-perishable items are collected during the month. Every 1st Sunday of each month the items will be delivered to a local Food Pantry. Fall and winter months are always challenging, and Food Pantries are always empty.



Days for Girls International is a grassroots non-profit creating a more dignified, humane and sustainable world for girls through advocacy, reproductive health awareness, education and sustainable feminine hygiene, because no girl should go without. The poverty cycle can be

broken when girls stay in school, which is a huge challenge in some countries. Not having sanitary supplies means Days without school and isolation. Days for Girls gives Days back to girls, Days that can change their lives. Our church will be joining the CT district and the New York Annual Conference this year to support the Days for Girls program. For \$20, one Kit will provide sustainable feminine hygiene for one girl for 3 years! Please make checks payable to the Saint Andrew's UMC (write Days for Girls in memo line).



Join us in our 2017 Operation Christmas Child campaign. Help us fill many boxes full with hope and joy for children all over the world. We will be collecting small toys, school supplies and \$9 per box so they can be shipped around the world. Packing Party will be on 11/12.



RAISE THE ROOF is a Connecticut District Mission Project in Partnership with the South Congo Conference. Bishop Kainda Katembo has reached out to Rev. Wayne Lavender, pastor of Faith UMC in North Haven and director of the Foundation 4

Orphans, requesting the construction of a new orphanage for 80 children in the city of Lubumbashi, DRC. The newly proposed and designed orphanage for 80 children will consist of 5 buildings. The roofing for these dorms will be tin. Each building will need 80 sheets of tin: cost to install each sheet of tin (including purchasing of the tin, nails and labor) will be approximately \$50. Our church will join our District on this project. Please make checks payable to the Saint Andrew's UMC (write Raise the Roof in memo line).



Hope Bags: We are looking for items to fill Hope bags to share with people in a homeless situation around New Haven. So far, our members have distributed more than 100 bags. Praise God! Some ideas are: 1 gallon zip lock bags, socks, cereal bars, water bottles, tissues, soap, deodorant, shampoos, etc.

Finance News



The General Council on Finance and Administration is proud to be in partnership with Tribute to present UMCmarket.org -- the online portal designed for United Methodists to shop online at a variety of retailers who will donate to your local church or other United Methodist entities, to help you raise funds for ministry. Visit umcmarket.org, establish your free online account and support our church.



Amazonsmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support our church every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to our church. Make sure you select Saint Andrew's UMC as your organization!

Letter from Finance Chairman

Thank you for your continued and faithful support which has allowed St. Andrew's UMC to do really meaningful ministries. I thank God for each one of you and your generosity because it is only with your responses that our ministries can be successful. God has brought us together to utilize our gifts and resources for Him.

As you all know, our annual Giving Campaign was held on Oct. 29th. Thank you to all who have pledged in previous years and those that pledged during this Campaign. We also thank everyone that chooses to donate weekly to our plate. As we start a new year we continue to need your help in order to maintain a vital and healthy church with a long future. We need your help to be responsible stewards of St. Andrews and of all the buildings in our care for many years to come. This means shutting lights off when not being needed and making sure everything is locked when we leave. It also means we depend on your pledges and financial giving to ensure the growth of our community, especially since we're already seeing some really cold weather and snow. We know we can count on your faithfulness because we know your gifts are given to advance God's Kingdom. It is only with your help that we will be able to fulfill our operational obligations and be a vital church helping to serve the community. The Finance Committee each year makes the church budget based on the pledges we receive. If anyone has any questions or issues related to their pledges or the church's finances please feel free to contact me. My home number is 203-248-1556.

Thank you and God Bless each of you.

John Quimby
Finance Chairman



Claire Webster for organizing amazing special brunches for our church! Norma Ryan and the choir for blessing us with the gift of Music during Advent and Christmas season.



Are you interested in becoming a member of our church or want to learn more about us? Please contact the pastor!



Here at Saint Andrew's, we believe in the power of prayer! If you or someone you know needs prayer, please contact the pastor by phone or e-mail.



Receive updates, prayer requests and what is happening in worship every week; subscribe to our mailing list by emailing us, office@standrewsnh.com



Please sign up to bring snacks and/or drinks for the coffee hour. The sign-up sheet is on the refrigerator in the kitchen. Contributions are greatly needed and appreciated!

Pastoral CARE

Pastor Ximena is available for talks, prayers and visits; in fact, she would love for you to invite her to visit. Please call her office, cell, or send her an e-mail to set up an appointment. Let her know if you or a loved one is in the hospital.



1 Corinthians 12:12-14 (The Voice)

Just as a body is one whole made up of many different parts, and all the different parts comprise the one body, so it is with the Anointed One. We were all ceremonially washed through baptism together into one body by one Spirit. *No matter our heritage—Jew or Greek, insider or outsider—no matter our status—oppressed or free—we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Here's what I mean:* the body is not made of one large part, but of many different parts.

Our church functions well when all the parts do their job, the vitality of the church lays on Disciples of Christ, like yourselves, willingness to share your gifts given by the Holy Spirit for the transformation of our community in Jesus' name.

We have several jobs open in our community. My hope is that you will consider sharing your time and your talents with us.

- Nursery Teacher and Assistant: provides care for children under 4 years of age during worship. The nursery teacher and assistant need to follow our Safe Sanctuary policies
- Altar Care: in charge of decorating the altar depending on the season and theme of worship, change the colors of the altar, buy and set the communion elements weekly.
- Administrative Assistant: assists the pastor with administrative tasks like printing bulletins, inserts and other office duties.
- Adult Group Leaders: organizes and facilitates small faith group formations that would meet at different places and times during the week.

If there is another gift that you possess that is not listed we invite you to talk to the pastor. We are all needed to make St. Andrew's a vital congregation that makes disciples in Jesus' name.



Sunday School News

The Sunday School took time off from the study of Moses to review the Christmas Story. The older class learned which parts of the Christmas Story that are based on fact (found in the Bible) and which parts are the result of tradition (stories passed down through the ages, and not found in the Bible). For instance, the Bible does not tell how Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem. Tradition tells us Mary rode on a donkey. We finished our study of Christmas with a party on December 17th. On the fourth Sunday of each month, we have music with Miss Janet. During November and December, we sang Christmas songs, with the hope of singing them in church.

Children 4 years old and older are invited to join Sunday school class the second, third and fourth Sunday of each month. Do you feel called to be a substitute teacher? Please talk to Carol or pastor Ximena



Thank you to again to everyone in the church for the support, both with items and money towards our Operation Christmas Child program. We met our challenge of doing 100 boxes this year. That's 100 children that received a box of items that wouldn't have received anything for Christmas or had the chance to learn about Jesus.

In case you had forgotten the story of our challenge, here it is. When my family delivered the boxes last year we were challenged to bring 100 this year. Our "little" church not only met the challenge of 100 boxes, but we also met the additional challenge of the shipping which went up from \$7 per box to \$9 per box. With God's help and all of us working together, we raised the additional \$200 we needed for the shipping. Thank you to Ralph and Willie for helping with making the rest of the boxes on Sat., Nov. 11. On Sun., Nov. 12 we had our PACKING PARTY after the coffee hour at the Parsonage where everyone helped pack the boxes for the children. A HUGE Thank You to everyone that helped.

On Saturday, November 18th John and I delivered the boxes to Gateway Bible Church in Oakville. Thank you and God Bless You. Pastor Bob greeted us and had a big Thank You to the entire congregation for our continuing support of this so important mission. With everyone's support we can continue this mission for years to come.

The Quimby family wishes to thank everyone for their help in this mission and may God Bless you all!



SEASON AFTER EPIPHANY 2018
Worship time 10:30 AM
RISE UP!



The historic and ecumenical purpose of the Season after Epiphany is to help the church to “rise up” and get ready for its work of accompanying people on their journey to baptism or restoration in the life of the church during the Season of Lent. This year, we will focus on the internal work the church needs to do to get ready. We need to be reminded that it is God speaking to us and among us. We need to listen to God's voice. We need to be ready to move when and where the Spirit says move. We need to answer God's call in the varieties of contexts we and those we'll prepare during Lent will experience it. We need to stay focused on our work and God's call-- the core work of discipline, not just fellowship or friendship. And we need to hear and help those we'll accompany during Lent hear God's call to go deeper, following Jesus where he leads.

1/7 Epiphany and Baptism of the Lord
God is speaking!

Scriptures: Isaiah 60:1-6 & Mark 1:4-11

1/14 Human Trafficking Awareness Day
Listen

Scriptures: I Samuel 3:1-10 & John 1:43-51

1/21 Move

Scriptures: Jonah 3:1-5, 10 & Mark 1:14-20

1/28 Answer

Scriptures: Deuteronomy 18:15-20 & Mark 1:21-28

2/4 Focus

Scriptures: Isaiah 40:21-31 & Mark 1:29-39

2/11 Transfiguration of the Lord
God is speaking!

Scriptures: 2 Kings 2:1-12 & Mark 9:2-9

**Saint Andrew's
United Methodist Church**

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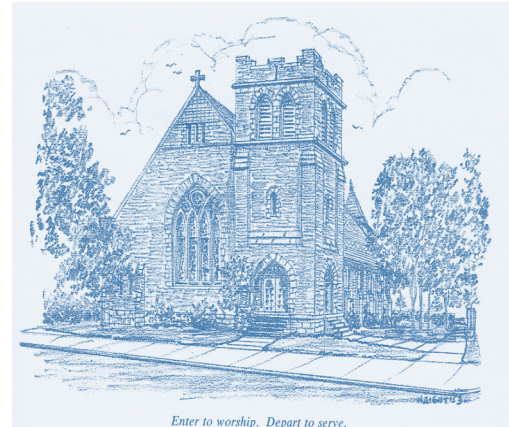
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